

thousand mile automobile trip now without a qualm, knowing that we can travel rapidly and comfortably over good roads with a minimum of trouble with our machine, the automobile in 1915 was just emerging from the degree of a luxury to that of a necessity. As travel by automobile became safer, surer, and more practicable, there was generated a desire for roads—connecting roads, better roads, and above all roads that finally got somewhere.

The Old Spanish Trail movement was organized at Mobile, Alabama, December 10-11, 1915. The thought at that convention, it is noteworthy, was to promote a highway that would connect New Orleans and the east coast of Florida; no more. But there were far-sighted men who were looking into the future, who were seeing beyond the immediate communities in which they lived and moved. They were responsible for enlarging the original idea into a Florida-California project with a route westward from New Orleans through Dallas. It was one thing to draw a line on a map where a highway should be, however, and entirely another to fling it through swamps, and over deserts. For seven years the project languished.

July 25, 1919, a conference was held at Houston. The idea of routing the Trail through Dallas still prevailed, but San Antonio was invited to that meeting with the result that San Antonio was asked to assume leadership of the movement and establish, if possible, a highway through the six great centers of historical interest in the Southern Borderlands, namely, Saint Augustine, New Orleans, San Antonio, El Paso, Tucson and San Diego. At San Antonio Mr. Ayres was selected as Managing Director. A convention was held at San Antonio in November of 1919 and attended by 130 West Texans, among others, whose enthusiastic support of the idea of a coast-to-coast highway made history. They pledged a road across West Texas, whereupon the convention voted to change the routing from Dallas and north Texas to San Antonio, Kerrville and Fort Stockton.

Other pledges followed for roads from Houston eastward, but in 1922 it was still clear that the Old Spanish Trail as a transcontinental highway did not yet exist. There were sections of the road where the physical conditions offered such obstacles